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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/604,316	06/27/2000	Gary R. Tidwell	BS99-124	5129

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EXAMINER

STIMPAK, JOHNNA

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3623

DATE MAILED: 09/03/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/604,316

Applicant(s)

TIDWELL ET AL.

Examiner

Johnna R Stimpak

Art Unit

3623

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 June 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6,9-19,21-25,28-33,36-50 and 53 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6,9-19,21-25,28-33,36-50 and 53 is/are rejected.

- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. The following is a final Office Action upon examination of application number 09/604,316, in response to the Amendment filed June 23, 2003. Claims 7, 8, 20, 26, 27, 34, 35, 51 and 52 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 12, 21, 29, 38 and 36 have been amended. Claims 1-69, 9-19, 21-25, 28-33, 36-50 and 53 are pending and have been examined on the merits discussed below.

Response to Amendment

2. Examiner agrees that Jones et al does not explicitly teach a trouble ticket system wherein an outsourced entity is responsible for resolving and acting on the tickets. New rejections have been formulated below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. **Claims 1-5, 7, 9, 11-13, 17-19, 21-24, 29-32, 36, 38, 39, 42-45, 46-49** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being anticipated by Jones et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,219,648 B1, in view of Peregrine's MELBA.

Art Unit: 3623

As per **claim 1**, Jones et al teaches a server in communication with an electronic network (column 7, lines 40-44, 49-51, 62-67 – a paging server is used to facilitate notification of trouble ticket alerts); a database in communication with the server, the database storing a plurality of trouble tickets (column 5, lines 55-60, column 6, lines 49-56) – information pertaining to trouble tickets is stored); a user computer in communication with the network and having access, via a graphical user interface (GUI), to the server, the graphical user interface including at least one screen, the screen being operable to enter a new trouble ticket along with (i) a person responsible for resolving the ticket (column 6, lines 5-12, lines 40-49, column 5, lines 55-60 – service center personnel enter trouble ticket information such as ID of the technician involved in resolution) and (ii) a severity level for the trouble ticket, and to store the trouble ticket in the database (column 5, lines 55-67 – escalation levels are entered for the trouble ticket which alert appropriate personnel to respond); and a paging system, in communication with the server, wherein when the severity level associated with the trouble ticket is above a predetermined threshold, the server automatically initiates a call to the person responsible via the paging system (column 7, lines 55-67 – when alerting criteria is satisfied, the managing module sends an alert through a paging server to a specified person).

Jones et al teaches all the limitation of claim 1 but does not explicitly teach means for sharing the trouble ticket data with an organization that operates under outside contract, the organization assigning its own tracking number to a given trouble ticket, the tracking number being stored in the database of the trouble tracking system, wherein the database stores information relating to whether a resolution of a trouble ticket, proposed by outsourced personnel who work for the organization, has been verified. Peregrine's MELBA system allows customers

Art Unit: 3623

to share trouble ticket information with outsourced contractors wherein opening a trouble ticket on the internal service would automatically open a corresponding ticket on an outsourcing contractor's help desk (page 1, paragraphs 2 and 3). The system is also updated as new information becomes available during work on open tickets (page 1, paragraphs 2 and 3). The system is also monitors and reports on the status of the ticket until resolution (page 1, paragraphs 2 and 3). Both Jones et al and Peregrine's MELBA teach trouble ticket systems wherein the tickets are created and the appropriate service providers are alerted to resolve the issue. The systems in both references perform the same functions, but Peregrine's MELBA goes one step further in that the trouble ticket can be acted upon by outside contractors in addition to other service providers. In Peregrine's MELBA opening a trouble ticket on an internal service desk automatically opens a ticket on an outside contractors help desk, therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention to include Peregrine's outsourced contractors as recipients of the trouble tickets created in Jones et al because the capabilities of the system would allow for faster, more accurate interaction, collaboration, problem diagnosis and resolution of support/problems.

As per **claim 2**, Jones et al teaches an email server, wherein the email server automatically sends an email message to the person responsible for resolving the ticket and the email message includes at least a trouble ticket number (column 3, lines 45-47, column 5, lines 51-60 – an email message is sent upon alert, including trouble ticket number).

As per **claim 3**, Jones et al teaches a report creation module, the report creation module being operable to generate reports based on the plurality of trouble tickets stored in the database (column 8, lines 55-67).

As per **claim 4**, Jones et al teaches a duplicate search module, the duplicate search module identifying at least one of an actual or a potential duplicate trouble ticket stored in the database (column 10, lines 11-18 – the parsing module searches ticket numbers to see if there are duplicate numbers, if so, the second ticket is ignored).

As per **claim 5**, Jones et al teaches the duplicate search module lists at least one pair of the actual or potential duplicate trouble tickets (column 10, lines 4-18 – the parsing manager sorts the master ticket numbers which are associated with each trouble ticket, when a first and second trouble ticket have the same master ticket number, the second can be ignored).

As per **claim 9**, Jones et al teaches the database further stores status information (column 9, lines 1-22).

As per **claim 11**, Jones et al teaches the network comprises the Internet (column 6, lines 28-32).

As per **claim 12**, Jones et al teaches a plurality of computers interconnected in a network, one of the computers including a trouble ticket database and an executable program for accessing and updating the database and each of the computers having access to a graphical user interface (GUI), the GUI including at least one screen operable to add a new trouble ticket to the database (column 6, lines 5-34), each trouble ticket including at least (i) a description of the issue (inherently a trouble ticket will include some description of the issue or problem), (ii) a person responsible for resolving the issue (column 8 lines 65-67 the report indicates the appropriate service center to handle the ticket, column 9, the position field indicates the technician assigned to the trouble ticket) and (iii) a severity level of the issue (column 9 the time field indicates the time when the ticket was generated, column 7, lines 55-58, time duration is used for alerting

Art Unit: 3623

appropriate personnel to respond); an email system in communication with the executable program, the executable program automatically emailing a trouble ticket number to the person responsible for resolving the issue (column 7, lines 62-67, column 8, lines 1-4 – the error manager alerts the appropriate personnel by email); and a paging system automatically paging the person responsible for resolving the issue when the severity level of the trouble ticket is above a predetermined threshold (column 7, lines 62-67, column 8, lines 1-4 – the error manager alerts the appropriate personnel by paging).

Jones et al teaches all the limitation of claim 1 but does not explicitly teach means for sharing the trouble ticket data with an organization that operates under outside contract, the organization assigning its own tracking number to a given trouble ticket, the tracking number being stored in the database of the trouble tracking system, wherein the database stores information relating to whether a resolution of a trouble ticket, proposed by outsourced personnel who work for the organization, has been verified. Peregrine's MELBA system allows customers to share trouble ticket information with outsourced contractors wherein opening a trouble ticket on the internal service would automatically open a corresponding ticket on an outsourcing contractor's help desk (page 1, paragraphs 2 and 3). The system is also updated as new information becomes available during work on open tickets (page 1, paragraphs 2 and 3). The system is also monitors and reports on the status of the ticket until resolution (page 1, paragraphs 2 and 3). Both Jones et al and Peregrine's MELBA teach trouble ticket systems wherein the tickets are created and the appropriate service providers are alerted to resolve the issue. The systems in both references perform the same functions, but Peregrine's MELBA goes one step further in that the trouble ticket can be acted upon by outside contractors in addition to other

Art Unit: 3623

service providers. In Peregrine's MELBA opening a trouble ticket on an internal service desk automatically opens a ticket on an outside contractors help desk, therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention to include Peregrine's outsourced contractors as recipients of the trouble tickets created in Jones et al because the capabilities of the system would allow for faster, more accurate interaction, collaboration, problem diagnosis and resolution of support/problems.

As per **claim 13**, Jones et al teaches the paging system transmits the trouble ticket number (column 2, lines 25-31).

As per **claim 17**, Jones et al teaches a duplicate trouble ticket module (column 10, lines 11-18 – the parsing module searches ticket numbers to see if there are duplicate numbers, if so, the second ticket is ignored).

As per **claim 18**, Jones et al teaches a report creation module (column 8, lines 55-67).

As per **claim 19**, Jones et al teaches the database is accessible via the Internet (column 6, lines 28-32).

As per **claim 21**, Jones et al teaches a central computer including an executable program and a database wherein the database stores a plurality of trouble tickets (column 6, lines 5-34 and 49-52), each trouble ticket including a trouble ticket number, an issue description and a duplicate ticket flag (column 9, lines 36-40 (service code defines service to be provided), 48-50 (trouble ticket number) and lines 63-66 (function level code refers to tickets grouped together based on duplicate master ticket number) column 10, lines 4-10); a plurality of user computers connected to the central computer via a network, the user computers displaying a graphical user interface (GUI) that permits entry and updating of trouble tickets in the database (column 6, lines 15-27

Art Unit: 3623

and 35-45 – the system runs on a computer wherein the service providers enter trouble ticket information); and a duplicate ticket module operable to search the database for actual or potential duplicate trouble tickets, the duplicate ticket module making available a list of actual or potential duplicate trouble tickets, wherein one or more duplicate trouble tickets are flagged with a trouble ticket number of a representative trouble ticket (column 10, lines 4-24 – the ticket numbers are grouped according to master ticket number, a parsing module combines trouble tickets having the same master ticket number by checking the trouble ticket numbers).

Jones et al teaches all the limitation of claim 1 but does not explicitly teach means for sharing the trouble ticket data with an organization that operates under outside contract, the organization assigning its own tracking number to a given trouble ticket, the tracking number being stored in the database of the trouble tracking system, wherein the database stores information relating to whether a resolution of a trouble ticket, proposed by outsourced personnel who work for the organization, has been verified. Peregrine's MELBA system allows customers to share trouble ticket information with outsourced contractors wherein opening a trouble ticket on the internal service would automatically open a corresponding ticket on an outsourcing contractor's help desk (page 1, paragraphs 2 and 3). The system is also updated as new information becomes available during work on open tickets (page 1, paragraphs 2 and 3). The system is also monitors and reports on the status of the ticket until resolution (page 1, paragraphs 2 and 3). Both Jones et al and Peregrine's MELBA teach trouble ticket systems wherein the tickets are created and the appropriate service providers are alerted to resolve the issue. The systems in both references perform the same functions, but Peregrine's MELBA goes one step further in that the trouble ticket can be acted upon by outside contractors in addition to other

Art Unit: 3623

service providers. In Peregrine's MELBA opening a trouble ticket on an internal service desk automatically opens a ticket on an outside contractors help desk, therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time of the invention to include Peregrine's outsourced contractors as recipients of the trouble tickets created in Jones et al because the capabilities of the system would allow for faster, more accurate interaction, collaboration, problem diagnosis and resolution of support/problems.

As per **claim 22**, Jones et al teaches a paging system (column 7, lines 55-67 – when alerting criteria is satisfied, the managing module sends an alert through a paging server to a specified person).

As per **claim 23**, Jones et al teaches each trouble ticket further includes an indication of severity and a person responsible field and when the indication of severity exceeds a predetermined threshold, the person identified in the person responsible field is paged (column 7, lines 55-67 – when alerting criteria is satisfied, the managing module sends an alert through a paging server to a specified person also column 9, lines 13-14 (the time field) – in Jones et al when the time duration reaches the specified criteria and alert is sent, the time field is included on the trouble ticket).

As per **claim 24**, Jones et al teaches an email server, wherein the person identified in the person responsible field is sent an email alerting him that he has been assigned a trouble ticket (column 62-67 and column 8, lines 1-5 – the person responsible for responding to the alert is emailed).

As per **claims 29-32 and 36**, they are the method for performing the steps of the system in claims 1-5 and 9, therefore the same rejection as applied to claims 1-5 and 9 apply to claims 29-32 and 36.

As per **claims 38, 39 and 43-45**, they are the method for performing the steps of the system in claims 12, 13 and 16-19, therefore the same rejection as applied to claims 12, 13 and 16-19 also applies to claims 38, 39 and 42-45.

As per **claims 46-49**, they are the method for performing the steps of the system in claims 21-24, therefore the same rejection as applied to claims 21-24 also applies to claims 46-49.

5. **Claims 10, 14, 15, 28, 37, 40, 41 and 53** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones et al in view of Peregrine's MELBA, in further view of Kidder et al, US Patent No. 6,445,774 B1.

As per **claim 10**, Jones et al in view of Peregrine's MELBA teaches all the limitation of claim 10 as applied to claim 1, but does not teach the database further stores information associating a trouble ticket to a geographical region. Kidder et al teaches recording the site location data (column 11, line 35). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include the geographical information of Kidder et al in the trouble ticket of Jones et al for tracking purposes and for purposes of assigning responsible personnel. Doing this would give the responsible personnel more information to lead to the resolution of the problem. The personnel would be more informed as to the location of the problem and would know exactly where to go. This would cut down on wasting time trying to track down the problem.

Art Unit: 3623

As per **claim 14**, Jones et al in view of Peregrine's MELBA teaches new trouble ticket fields including status (column 9, lines 50-54) but does not teach the screen operable to add a new trouble ticket includes a field indicating the closed date of the trouble ticket. Kidder et al teaches storing a "terminate message" conveying that the ticket has been closed (column 13, lines 2-5). It is old and well known in the art that trouble tickets are "closed out" upon delivery of service as an indication that the problem does not need to be attended to. Jones et al teaches recording the open date of the trouble ticket so it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the recordation of the closed date of Kidder et al into the trouble ticket of Jones et al to provide for an indication that the particular matter does not need any further consideration. This is helpful for saving time from attending to problems that have already been resolved.

As per **claim 15**, Jones et al in view of Peregrine's MELBA teaches all the limitation of claim 15 as applied to claim 12, but does not teach the database further stores information associating a trouble ticket to a geographical region. Kidder et al teaches recording the site location data (column 11, line 35). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include the geographical information of Kidder et al in the trouble ticket of Jones et al for tracking purposes and for purposes of assigning responsible personnel. Doing this would give the responsible personnel more information to lead to the resolution of the problem. The personnel would be more informed as to the location of the problem and would know exactly where to go. This would cut down on wasting time trying to track down the problem.

As per **claim 28**, Jones et al in view of Peregrine's MELBA teaches all the limitation of claim 28 as applied to claim 21, but does not teach the database further stores information

Art Unit: 3623

associating a trouble ticket to a geographical region. Kidder et al teaches recording the site location data (column 11, line 35). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include the geographical information of Kidder et al in the trouble ticket of Jones et al for tracking purposes and for purposes of assigning responsible personnel. Doing this would give the responsible personnel more information to lead to the resolution of the problem. The personnel would be more informed as to the location of the problem and would know exactly where to go. This would cut down on wasting time trying to track down the problem.

As per **claim 37**, it is the method of the steps of the system of claim 10; therefore the same rejection as applied to claim 10 also applies to claim 37.

As per **claim 40**, it is the method of the steps of the system of claim 14; therefore the same rejection as applied to claim 14 also applies to claim 40.

As per **claim 41**, it is the method of the steps of the system of claim 15; therefore the same rejection as applied to claim 15 also applies to claim 41.

As per **claim 53**, it is the method of the steps of the system of claim 28; therefore the same rejection as applied to claim 28 also applies to claim 53.

6. **Claims 6, 16, 25, 33, 42 and 50** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones et al, US Patent No. 6,219,648 B1 in view of Peregrine's MELBA.

As per **claim 6**, Jones et al in view of Peregrine's MELBA teach the trouble tickets comprise at least one of a problem (column 5, lines 55-60) and an inquiry (column 5, lines 55-60), but does not teach adding a bill notification and a user acceptance data issue to the database. Official notice is taken that it is old and well known that when a service is performed a charges

Art Unit: 3623

will incur. It would have been obvious to add billing information to the database for proper record keeping. It would also be obvious to include user acceptance data. It is also old and well known that when a service is performed there may be other non-related or related services that could be performed that are not known at the time the trouble ticket is processed. It would be obvious to make note of this and get the acceptance from the user. If the user agrees, the service can be performed and an appropriate charge will be made. The motivation for adding the billing information and user acceptance information would be to keep an accurate record of charges to be made for services provided. This will also cut down on services being provided that are not wanted by the user.

As per **claim 16**, the same rejection as applied to claim 6 above is applied to claim 16.

As per **claim 25**, the same rejection as applied to claim 6 above is applied to claim 25.

As per **claim 33**, it is the method of the steps of the system of claim 6; therefore the same rejection as applied to claim 6 also applies to claim 33.

As per **claim 42**, it is the method of the steps of the system of claim 16; therefore the same rejection as applied to claims 16 also applies to claim 42.

As per **claim 50**, it is the method of the steps of the system of claim 25; therefore the same rejection as applied to claim 25 also applies to claim 50.

7. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

Art Unit: 3623

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Art Unit: 3623

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Johnna Stimpak** whose telephone number is **703-305-4566**. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, **Tariq Hafiz**, can be reached on **703-305-9643**.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the **Receptionist** whose telephone number is **703-308-1113**.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

Or faxed to:

703-305-7687

[Official communications; including
After Final communications labeled
"Box AF"]

703-746-3956

[Informal/Draft communications, labeled
"PROPOSED" or "DRAFT"]

Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park 5, 2451 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA, 7th Floor.

JS
8/27/2003


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